



Business Resources for Minority- and Women-Owned Firms

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All entrepreneurs share the dream of starting their own business and jumpstarting their success. Minority-owned and women-owned businesses often face unique challenges. These businesses tend to be smaller and generate lower profits than businesses owned by non-minorities. Minority entrepreneurs are also less likely to get access to seed or start-up money, successful mentors, prominent networks, credit financing, and generational wealth, which are key predictors of a business's future success.

The Charles County Economic Development Department is committed to business development and advancing opportunities for all county businesses. Our Small Local Business Enterprise program creates opportunities for local entrepreneurs to do business with Charles County Government. While the program is not specifically for minority- and women-owned companies, many of our small businesses fit its criteria. The county has a Minority Business Enterprise Program (MBE), which encourages minority business participation in the county procurement process by providing technical assistance with certification and promoting MBEs as prime and subcontractors on county projects. The Economic Development Department also has a Business Development Loan Fund for minorities, women, and veterans.

This fund offers microloans up to \$35,000, which can be used for working capital, inventory, staffing, and more.

There are many additional local resources to assist minority- and women-owned businesses. Here are a few you may want to consider in your search:

Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce serves as an advocacy group that champions favorable legislation for minority and women entrepreneurs and offers resources and networking opportunities. Contact them at 443-646-5744 or at www.smmcoc.org.

Maryland Department of Transportation has an MBE program that certifies minority-owned businesses and provides contracting opportunities that are available throughout the state. Contact them at 410-865-1269 or at www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/MBE/Index.html.

Maryland Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs is the State's primary advocate for small, minority- and women-owned businesses. The Office promotes fairness and compliance in government contracting and endorses the utilization of certified MBE and Small Business Reserve firms. Contact them at 410-697-9600 or <https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov>.

Maryland Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) provides counseling services at no or low cost to business owners who want to do business with the government and respond to RFPs. Contact them at [301-403-2740](tel:301-403-2740) or www.mdptap.org/.

The **Maryland Technology Development Corporation** connects emerging technology companies with federal laboratories, research universities, and more. Contact them at 410-740-9442 or www.marylandtedco.org.

The **Small Business Development Center** is the perfect starting place for any business, with resources for writing a business plan, educational resources, and more. Contact them at

301-934-7583 or www.marylandsbdc.org/locations/southern-region.

U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency offers tools specifically designed to enhance the growth of minority businesses, including financial and globalization information. Contact them at 202-482-1940 or www.mbda.gov.

For further assistance with business resources, programs, or information, call the Economic Development Department at 301-885-1340 or visit www.MeetCharlesCounty.com/business-

[support](#). We look forward to assisting you with your business needs in the new year!

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